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PROGRESS IN ART

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TO the philosophic observer of Nature there is one principle which is apparently operative in all things at all times. This constant principle is Change. All things are not only subject to change but are seen to be actually in process of changing if observed with sufficient scientific attention. Nothing is stable, nothing definitely fixed, however much it may appear so. But all things are forever and eternally changing or being changed. The quality which we call stability is only an apparent, not a real one. We can only speak of something as fixed, or stable, in comparison with some thing else which is undergoing a more rapid rate of change. A rock seems to be an enduring and permanent thing compared to the weed which grows beside it; which springs up, matures, and withers all in the space of a single season. And it is of course perfectly true that in comparison to the weed the rock is stable. But science tells us that the rock, owing to the action of weather, rain, snow, ice, and subsequent frost, is gradually becoming smaller as a whole, or breaking up into fragments, which in turn are still subject to the law of change. We are even told that constant movement is in process among the molecular particles composing the rock; that a constant shifting and vibratory action is never absent; eventually affecting, through vast reaches of time the very consistency of the rock itself.

The great lesson of nature to the mind of man in the nineteenth century is the fact of *evolution*. It was called at first the *theory* of evolution. But it is at present accepted as an indisputable fact that higher forms have been derived or evolved from lower forms. And this in spite of the fact that there are many

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“missing links” in the chain as shown forth by organic nature. Enough evidence is at hand to indicate surely the operation of this principle. Nothing occurs unrelately. Everything depends upon something else. The form, or complexity of organization of one of nature’s products, has surely depended upon, and been conditioned by that which has existed before, in point of time. Evolution means unfoldment; expansion; development, and hence implies a progression from the comparatively simple to the more complex.

The converse of this principle is also true. It is degeneration. There is evolution and there is degeneration, and nature is full of the evidences of the operation of one or the other of these principles. Many a plant, an animal, or a physical aspect of nature appears to be on investigation but a degenerate form of that which at one time was more complex or perfect. All things are either evolving or degenerating; either moving forward or receding, being built up or falling into decay. Although at different rates of speed, all things are moving. All things are changing for better or for worse. All effects, no matter how solid and fixed they may appear, are but phases of the sleepless rhythm of nature. Movement never dies or even ceases, but beats out forever, through all things, the lesson that change always was, is, and ever shall be. Even were it not for the mass of evidence uncovered and brought forth by the evolutionists: the geologic and historic testimony, fossils, and in the human era the records of the disappearance of a species of animal, or the development of certain fruits and flowers; even I say were it not for this evidence, the very fact that nature presents such a diversity of effects simultaneously, would suggest to the thoughtful mind that this very quality of diversity had a sequential existence as well as having an immediate one. “Nothing is constant but change” said Heraclitus and the investigations and conclusions of modern science tend but to confirm this ancient dictum. Stability is after all but a relative term.

II

The changes which we are able to observe in physical *inorganic* nature are mostly those of a disintegrating tendency. Such as the violent, or gradual, encroachment of the sea upon the land; the ultimate disappearance of certain islands; the effect of the weather on soils and rocks; and particularly the effect of moving water, in rivers often cutting deep gorges or canons in the earth for hundreds of miles, or in the ocean wearing away and polishing down each fragment of rock to the smooth and quasi-spherical form of

the well known beach pebble. There are, of course, plenty of instances of the *constructive* operation of these *inorganic* forces; such as the accretions of land at the deltas of rivers, or the forming of stalactites and stalagmites in caves; but in general their operation appears to be destructive rather than otherwise.

But in *organic* nature—the domain of life—the law of change may be much more easily observed at work both as integration and disintegration. Every living thing is born, grows, matures, decays, and dies. And this process may be observed in each individual plant or animal, or on a larger scale in each race or family of plants or animals. The arc of the circle is complete. It rises and then it falls. Change is constant but not always does it proceed in the same direction. Each season unrolls for us a wonderful and vivid illustration of this series of changes in the vegetable kingdom, and the life of each man, or other animal, proclaims the law, as it were, from the house tops.

In the popular mind a distinction is usually drawn between that which is called Nature, and the kingdom of Man. A hard and fast notion prevails that there is Humanity, on the one hand, and that there is Nature, something outside of, different, and on the whole lower, on the other hand. But the more philosophic, scientific and hence truer conception is to regard Man as but a part of Nature. In all zoological treatises he is classed as the highest vertebrate. The same fundamental natural laws apply to him and his activities as to the other animals. He is subject to the same natural process of birth, growth, maturity, decay, and death, as is every other living thing. And we must realize (considering the universality of the principle of change) that all his contrivances and inventions are likewise subject to the same sequential process. The contrivances or constructions of all animals (man included) are in this larger and more philosophic sense as much a part of nature as is the animal himself. We certainly regard birds nests and beaver's dams as parts of nature. Why should we not regard a man's house (which he builds) as a manifestation of nature as much as a caddis-fly's house (which it builds)? The man's house is subject to the same natural laws as the man himself; and as it is an emanation from a part of organic nature (the man himself) it is subject to the same series of changes as is the man. Roughly speaking, it has its period of inception (or birth) of growth, of completion (or maturity), of decay, and final ruin (or death).

The popular distinction between *natural* and *artificial*, although very convenient and even necessary, is apt to be misleading.

We, as men, are prone to be prejudiced in favor of our own inventions and contrivances; to look upon our civilizations, our governments and all our lesser works as things above and apart from what we call Nature and as such not subject to Nature's laws but to our wills. We are misled and blinded to the fact that our very will and all the work that it accomplishes is as inevitably a part of nature as the pine tree yonder, and that the laws of Nature work as inevitably in what we consider our special domain, as elsewhere.

III

The perspicacious will now perceive what I am driving at. Art, being one of man's activities, is dominated, in its history, by the same natural laws which dominate man himself and all other of his activities. In fact, a slight knowledge of history suffices to show forth in a most convincing manner the operation of natural law in the affairs of man. Consider the rise and decline of civilizations; of governments; of industries; the development and decay of languages; of religions; of manners and customs. The periods of youth, maturity, age and decay, are to be observed in all these things. They are but parts of Nature after all, however much the distinction of *natural* and *artificial* may tend to confuse us on this point. Now I ask why should Art, one of the most special, intimate, and significant of man's expressions, not be subject to these same natural laws which affect all the others? To assume that Art stands outside of and apart from the domination of those natural laws which affect all the other activities of Man is to my mind to be guilty of great illogicability. Can a department of Nature be found in which natural law does not work? The proposition is absurd upon the face of it. Once the fact is grasped that man's actions and works are as much a part of Nature as man himself, the exemption of one of these spheres of action from the operation of natural law, is not only illogical; it is to the philosophic mind impossible, unthinkable. Yet many there be who claim that there is no such thing as progress in art. That is to say they (to me) appear to claim that art as a sphere of man's activity had no period of youth, that it was born at once fully developed, full fledged as it were. They claim that a work of art is a single and unique manifestation of the soul of a particular artist having no connection with, or relation to, that which came before or that which may follow; that it is neither to be improved upon, nor is its perfection in any way the result of previous efforts by other artists. Yet the selfsame species of person who denies the existence of progress

in art is frequently found almost in the same breath to be lamenting the decadence of art. This is a double evidence of irrationality, for while the original contention flies in the face of the universally operative laws of nature, the belief in the decadence of art is inconsistent with the belief in its non-progression. For that which decays must once have grown, that which recedes from a height must previously have attained to that height. There is no coming down that does not imply a previous going up. As surely as that which grows and ripens will ultimately decay, just so surely will that which shows signs of decadence have previously grown and ripened. Approached from either side, the acceptance of one of these propositions logically implies a belief in the past or future existence of the other. Decadence presupposes growth: Growth involves ultimate decay: Falling necessitates previous rising: Rising implies subsequent falling, etc., etc.

Before going any further I will make a few remarks tending to define progress. Both progress and its opposite—regress—are movement. These terms are applied to movement of any kind, and are intended to specify the *tendency* of that movement in relation to an object, a point, an idea, or an ideal. *Progress* is that tendency in movement which makes for life—for more complete organization of a definite subject under our consideration, and hence is *constructive* in its character in relation to *that* subject. *Regress* on the other hand is that tendency in movement which makes for death—for disorganization of the definite subject under our consideration, and hence is destructive in its character in relation to *that* subject. Nature, life, the world is full of progressive and regressive movements occurring simultaneously but in different departments. Never can they occur simultaneously concerning a definite and single series of events under our contemplation. They often however may appear to do so, and a series of events which one person may call progress, another person may characterize as regress. In this case there is no question of the tendency of the movement of the series of events however. The difference in their characterization, lies entirely in the minds of the observers. Frequently this difference of opinion as to whether a particular series of events exhibits progress or regress arises from the fact that unconsciously to themselves each observer is observing in reality a different series of events. Take the case of a man who is ill with a fever. His friends who are solicitous as to his health are told that he is failing and condole with each other over his decline from a state of health; over his retrogression. The doctor on the other hand, with his scientifically trained mind

focussed on the fever, reports to his confreres that the fever is making great progress, is gaining rapidly and that the man's death may be expected in a certain number of hours. Who has not heard the doctor talk of the progress of a disease; and who has not heard the layman talk of the progress of a person's recovery? It makes a difference which series of events the mind is contemplating. The *point* I would emphasize is that there can be progress in any *species* of events.

At this point most of my logically minded readers, who have thus far followed my thought will say to themselves "Of course this is so. Who doubts or disputes it? Certainly all thinkers must agree that there is progress in Art as in everything else." Lest I may be accused of Quixotism; fighting windmills; making a mountain out of a mole hill, etc., let us examine some of the utterances concerning progress in art by John Ruskin, one of the most eminent of modern art-critics. In "The Two Paths" (p. 39) Ruskin says:

Whatever changes may be made in the customs of society, whatever new machines we may invent, whatever new manufactures we may supply, Fine Art must remain what it was two thousand years ago, in the days of Phidias; two thousand years hence, it will be in all its principles and in all its great effects upon the mind of man, just the same.

This is certainly definite enough. Not only, does he enunciate his belief but predicts (practically) that it will always continue to be true. In our art of music we need only consider Hucbald with his "Organum" and the 19th century art of Richard Wagner. The end toward which the two men strove may at a pinch be considered the same in each case, but the very principles of musical art seem to have changed since Hucbald's day.

Ruskin, indeed, seems to contradict himself in his utterances on art. He is a shining example of a person who had impressions rather than thoughts. Some of his paragraphs while they apparently assert that art does not progress leave one to infer that after all there must be such a thing. In his "Lectures on Architecture" (p. 84) he says:

The art of the thirteenth century is the foundation of all art—not merely the foundation, but the root of it; that is to say, succeeding art is not merely built upon it, but was all comprehended in it. (Again at p. 116 of the same work we read:) In mediæval art, thought is the first thing, execution the second. And again in mediæval art truth is first, beauty second; in modern art, beauty is first, truth second. The mediæval principles led *up* to Raphael, and the modern principles led *down* from him.

This last quotation would lead us to conclude that even Ruskin could not entirely blind himself to the perception of the operation of the law of change—in art as elsewhere. We are all the more surprised to read in “Mornings in Florence” (p. 43):

Etruscan art remains in its own Italian valleys . . . in one unbroken series of work from the seventh century before Christ to this hour, when the country whitewasher still scratches his plaster in Etruscan patterns. . . Every hue of the Florentine chisel in the fifteenth century is based on national principles of art which existed in the seventh century before Christ.

The account of the Ruskin-Whistler trial—its ridiculous outcome—and the ironic witticisms to which it gave rise—still contribute to the gayety of nations. James McNeil Whistler, a type of mind in complete contrast to that of Ruskin, appeared at least once in his life as the critic and art expounder, much as he hated the species. This was in his charming, eccentric and poetic “10 o’clock” lecture. This is a collection of epigrammatic fireworks, many of them so brilliant that we are tempted to swallow them whole without thinking about them. When, however, we read such things as the following (on p. 25):

The master stands in no relation to the moment at which he occurs—a monument of isolation—hinting at sadness—having no part in the progress of his fellow men. . . . So Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress;

we certainly raise our eyebrows and perceive that here speaks the aristocratic, beloved and eccentric artist, rather than the thinker. The last sentence in the quotation is one of these epigrammatic fireworks to which I have referred. It sounds impressive but *is* sheer nonsense. How can a thing be limited to the unlimited, and begin where both the terms beginning and end are without meaning? No, Art is a *finite* thing like all other things which we can conceive of and talk about. No man can conceive of infinity. It is just a word to suggest to us something which we cannot conceive of.

A recent English writer on æsthetics, Mr. Clive Bell says, “It is the mark of great art that its appeal is universal and eternal.” Followed to its logical conclusion this utterance implies that humanity is of one type all over the world, always has been, and never will change. In regard to the *universal* appeal of great art I very much doubt if one of Wagner’s music dramas or one of Corot’s pictures would convey the same æsthetic message to a Chinaman as it does to a European. Regarding the *eternal*

appeal of great art I also very much doubt whether these great works will exert the same authoritative and convincing effect upon the minds of persons a thousand years hence as they do upon us. No, it is not Humanity which does not change. Neither is it Art. Both Art and Humanity are constantly changing; sometimes progressing; sometimes retrogressing. I will not waste time examining other of Clive Bell's utterances. I have examined many of them. They consistently maintain a disbelief in the progress of art and are for the most part on a par with the meandering rhapsodies of Ruskin and the aphoristic fireworks of Whistler.

Finally there is Benedetto Croce, the great high priest of æsthetics of the present day. Croce is a keen and careful thinker and worthy of more serious consideration than any of the preceding. Nevertheless he is sometimes guilty of the "cuttle-fish" tactics resorted to by many writers on metaphysics. The cuttle-fish, you know, when in a tight place, emits a quantity of inky substance which discolors the water in his locality to such an extent, that he is enabled to make his escape before his enemies recover their eyesight. In a similar manner the metaphysician; when his thought becomes very involved, or leads him to a conclusion which is obviously ridiculous, he throws out a cloud of high flown words which have the double effect of hiding his own weakness, and of beclouding the mind of the reader, thus throwing his critical faculty "off the scent." Another favorite trick is slightly to change the meaning of a "key" word, and still another skilfully to shift the point under discussion.

All these tactics are resorted to by Croce in his chapter concerning progress in Art. Having proved to his own satisfaction (if not to that of his reader), that there is and can be no such thing as progress in Art he admits that there are such things as "cycles" in its development, and proceeds to give examples of them, principally concerning the art of literature. But now the word "cycle," meaning an imaginary circle, conveys to our minds the idea of a complete line, including both rising and falling curves—both the ideas of progress and regress. An idea strictly in accord with nature's law. Croce, now evidently perceiving his self-contradiction, boldly changes the subject under discussion to the "æsthetic progress of *humanity*." This naturally concerns itself with the *effect* of art *on* humanity and is quite another thing from the consideration of art by itself. Letting drive at this new point all the fires of his rhetoric he concludes his chapter in apparent triumph.

In this connection I cannot help thinking of the old story of the man who opens his door and orders his dog to "*go out.*" The dog slinks under the bed, whereupon the man says "All right, go under the bed then. *I will* be minded."

It may be objected, however, these are great names; Ruskin, Whistler, Bell, and Croce; great names and great authorities. Such an objection reminds me of a passage in Thomas Love Peacock's "Headlong Hall." The scene is a dinner party at the residence of Squire Headlong. An argument is in progress between two of the guests. To the proposition of one gentleman, another objects, backing up his objection by the quotation of a list of authorities, long enough to cause an attack of acute indigestion on the spot. When he concludes, his antagonist merely smiles and says, "Ah, my dear sir, so you prefer an *authority* to a *reason.*"

IV

Now what is Art—this Fine Art which many persons regard as to be of such a high and wonderful character that it is above the laws of nature—a manifestation in which progress is said to be impossible? Very numerous have been the answers by philosophers and thinkers of all degrees of ability, to this question. Although slightly divergent in detail, all these thinkers (for the last hundred and fifty years, say) agree fairly well on one main point. That is this: that the object of Art is Beauty—that a work of Art should express and represent the Beautiful in some form or other.

The first sentence in Hegel's "Æsthetik" is as follows:

The present course of lectures deals with 'Æsthetic.' Their subject is in the wide realm of the beautiful, and more particularly, their province is Art—we may restrict it indeed to Fine Art.

Later on in the same work he says:

Now, as a work of Art is not merely to do in general something of the nature of arousing emotion (for this is a purpose which it would have in common, without specific difference, with eloquence, historical composition, religious edification, and so forth) but is to do so only in so far as it is beautiful, reflection hit upon the idea, seeing that beauty was the object, of searching out a *peculiar feeling of beauty, etc.*

In the "Critical Exposition of Hegel's Æsthetics" by J. S. Kedney occurs this sentence: "Both Kant and Hegel, when they think of the beautiful, have in mind the productions of Art." These quotations are typical and truly representative of the attitude of the German metaphysicians concerning Art and Beauty.

Beauty is the object of Art, and Art exists for the purpose of showing forth Beauty. This proposition is unfailingly maintained in all theoretical and abstract works concerning the domain of Æsthetics. Even Dr. Ferdinand Hand in writing more particularly of the "Æsthetics of Musical Art" (in his book of that name) says:

This leads us immediately into a larger and higher province, . . . in which the spirituality of music evinces itself, viz.: *To its subordination to the idea of beauty.* . . . It may be that either the comprehensibility of melody, or the proportionableness of harmony, or the free play of the fantasy prevails, and determines the character of the musical work, and gratifies us more or *less*; but for all that the general requirements for an art work remain the same, viz., that it shall be a beautiful work.

All modern writers in English continue to harp upon this idea. With parrot-like repetition, and a most unoriginal insistence they unfailingly assert it as a truth past the possibility of discussion. "Art is the science of beauty" exclaims Oscar Wilde—"Art is the representation of the beautiful" says Dr. Paul Carus. In "The Essentials of Æsthetics" (1906) by George Lansing Raymond we read:

Our whole argument tends to show that the mere fact that effects are 'true to nature' by no means justifies their use in art of high quality. They can be used in this so far only as. . . they are in themselves beautiful, etc.

while Paul Gaultier says, in "The Meaning of Art" (1914):

every work of art must be beautiful. That which lacks beauty can in no wise claim the name of art. If art is play, it is play that produces beauty.

The trouble and unsatisfactory quality with all these assertions lies in the possibility of variance, in the definition of Beauty. The philosophers themselves are thoroughly aware of this and when in addition to their primal dictum (that the object of art is beauty) they attempt to define beauty, we immediately become lost and confused in a perfect labyrinth of conflicting opinions. These hair-splitting lucubrations immediately remind one of the well known definition of metaphysics attributed to Emerson—"a blind man, in a dark room, chasing a black cat which isn't there." If the function of art is to express beauty and we do not know what beauty is, then such a statement is a mere generality—a pompous sounding form of words—which conveys, in reality, no definite idea to the mind. It is quite generally true that what

is considered beautiful by one race is frequently considered ugly by another race. And this seems to be true no matter in what form or manner the beauty is made manifest. Take the case of feminine beauty, for instance. How different is the ideal of feminine beauty in the English race from that of the Chinese race! Many of the points, the physical characteristics, the actual presence of which is deemed necessary to womanly beauty by the Englishman, are considered to be actual defects by the Chinaman. Even among individuals of the same race a large diversity of opinion concerning this point is apparent. Or take the case of music. Who has not at one time or another during his life listened to the banging, whistling, tooting, and all the percussory clamor of a Chinese orchestra? What a contrast to our European art of music! Yet it appears to give the Chinaman pleasure and evidently affords him æsthetic satisfaction.

It will here be asserted by many, that though the conceptions of beauty are so various, though beauty itself apparently assumes so many violently contrasted and even diametrically opposed forms, the function of human Fine Art is nevertheless to appeal to our *sense of beauty*, no matter how different that *sense* may be in different persons and races. Yet, this is not much of an improvement. It does not ameliorate to any appreciable extent our original difficulty—which was to define beauty—for now we are put to it to define the *sense* of beauty. To tell what that is, seems to be a little bit worse if possible than to tell what beauty is. In fact the farther we go in this direction the deeper we get, apparently, into the mire of metaphysics, and the farther from a clear understanding of the function of Art. What Art really is, and what is its true function, I shall attempt to set forth in my concluding section.

V

Art is a language. Like other languages it has two great functions. It is both a means of expression, and a means of communication. Our ordinary, every-day word-language is used by the speaker, both to express his thoughts or desires, and to communicate them to others. In an analysis of what happens, self-expression comes first. Communication is a subsequent effect of the self-expression. The self-expression may be of varying degrees of accuracy, as it depends on the mastery of the speaker over the material of expression used. (In this case word-language). The communication may likewise be faulty owing to the inability

of the recipient to grasp in its perfection that which the speaker would communicate.

Now in Art the *speaker* is the creative artist (Poet, Composer, etc.). His first need is that of self-expression. Some particular aspect of nature or life appeals to him with irresistible force and cries for expression. Those to whom he communicates are the appreciators of his art. As in word-language, his self-expression will not necessarily be the best possible, but will vary in accordance with his mastery over the material in which he works. As time goes on and self-expression through his chosen medium becomes more frequent, it is but reasonable to assume that he will gradually attain to greater mastery over it. In other words, that he will progress in his individual art. That this is what actually happens may be clearly seen through the intimate study of the life of any creative artist. Thus, on the technical side it is beyond all question, and must be readily admitted by all that the individual creative artist makes as time goes on definite and perfectly appreciable progress in his art.

But there is another aspect of Art, far more important than the merely technical side. That is its spiritual side. What value it has for the creative artist first, and lastly what value and effect it has on the race! In this spiritual evaluation lies the key of the whole matter. It is well known that self-expression is a means of growth. That the more we express ourselves, the more of ourselves there is to express. That the self grows in size, dignity and power in accordance with the amount of expression which it attains to, is, at present, recognized as a truism (almost as a platitude) by all modern psychologists and thinkers. Consider then how the soul of the creative artist grows, expands and deepens as he continues to express himself through his art. The very texture of his art changes. Not alone does he attain to greater mastery of his medium—mere technical proficiency—but his art becomes richer and far more significant in its very essence. This process which again may be clearly observed at work in the lives of all creative artists, certainly shows a progress in their art of the most significant kind. Not merely do they attain to greater technical proficiency but their art itself comes gradually to have greater value as art.

What is it that the artist would express and communicate through his art? We have seen that the language of art has the two functions common to all language; that of expression and that of communication. Now what is the nature of that which is expressed and subsequently communicated? For a long time it

has been supposed, as I have related, that the particular province of art was "the beautiful." Tons of paper, and rivers of midnight oil have been used up in the construction of learned treatises on the æsthetic faculty; on the laws of beauty—on Art as the expression of man's perception of beauty, and what not; all hovering round and about this chameleon-like word "beauty" of such doubtful and ambiguous meaning. But that the particular province of Art is the expression of the beautiful, I consider to be a fallacy, or at least but a partial truth. Art may also express ugliness, terror, humor, nobility, joy or sadness and still be art. A gargoye can hardly be said to be beautiful; still it is Art. And it is difficult to recognize the same element of beauty in the terrible "Laocoön" and Wagner's Siegfried Idyll, for instance. Still both are art and very high examples of it. Therefore, to assert that the function of art is to express the beautiful in one form or another, is at best a somewhat misleading statement. Those who still maintain that the province of art is to express the beautiful, and the beautiful only, can get around the difficulty by widening the meaning of the word beauty. By this process its meaning can become so inclusive as finally to preclude the possibility of its definition. This is convenient but not enlightening.

There is another element outside the activities of the individual creative artist, and which not only affects him personally, but has an almost dominative effect on the progress or decline of art as a whole. This element, without which there would be no progress, is appreciation. The appreciator coöperates with the creative artist and the eventual result of this coöperation is progress in the art itself.

To create anything requires faith. Belief in that which is seen by the eye of the soul, and belief in one's powers of accomplishing its expression. This is the initiative act of the creative artist in creating a work of art. But in order that he may sustain this belief in himself and his artistic power, it is necessary that his work make a visible and tangible effect on others. It must appeal to others as something to be loved and treasured. As it does so, there is reflected to him a belief in his power of creation and the potency of that which he would create. He is sustained and encouraged in his activity and urged onward in this process of self-expression. Without this encouraging stimulant from outside of himself his creative power would soon decline, shrivel up and eventually cease entirely. But if in the process of self-expression the number of his appreciators increase and express their appreciation; this fact cannot fail to have a definite effect on his own growth

as an artist, stimulating him to ever greater degrees of power and proficiency.

Thus the process of progress goes on. Action on the part of the creative artist causes reaction from the appreciators inciting in its turn further and finer action in the creative artist. Both artist and appreciator grow in refinement and capacity. And as each individual artist dies or ceases to produce owing to age or disability he leaves behind a group of appreciators (frequently a very large group) whose powers of appreciation and discrimination are developed to such a point that they unconsciously demand that the art of his successors be equal if not superior to that to which he has accustomed them. Hence we see that this cause plays a large and very important part in the phenomenon of progress in Art. The appreciators of Art are by no means an entirely passive group, although the majority may be. Criticism is the voice of the appreciative group. Jarring as may be the voice of the individual critic at first, the body of criticism finally represents public opinion, has its effect on the developing soul of the creative artist and after him demands that a standard of excellence be at least lived up to if not surpassed by future creative artists.

But this rising wave of creation and appreciation is destined at length to recede. Inexorably the natural law of ebb and flow, growth and decay, manifests itself in Art as in everything else. Inasmuch as appreciation plays such an important part in the development of Art, a lack of this appreciation will certainly cause its decline. Let war, pestilence, or great political events turn men's minds roughly and strongly away from the consideration and appreciation of art, and art will certainly languish and if this condition persists art will ultimately decline. As Art has its inception in the soul of the creative artist, so the cause of its decline can be surely traced to a lack of appreciation of it.

This progress, change, movement, development and decadence which we can observe and study in the personality of the individual creative artist, is but an isolated example of that law of growth which affects art as a whole. His individual art is the microcosm; the whole of this species of art the macrocosm. Universal laws have usually been arrived at and truthfully apprehended through the study of particular instances of their manifestation. Through the falling of a single apple, Newton apprehended the law of all falling bodies, and subsequently the universal principle of gravitation. The particular instance—be it the personality of a single creative artist, or the falling of a single apple—is pregnant of suggestion to the reflective mind. We

study the laws of operation in particular cases, relate them to the laws of operation which we have observed in other particular cases, and lo! before long we have apprehended a universal law.

The law of progress and decline, growth and decay, may not only be seen to be operative in the work of the individual artist, but can just as certainly be seen to operate in the collective work of many artists through a period of time. An unrelated fact—be it rock, man, idea, or art-work does not and cannot exist. Each thing contains in itself both the elements of cause and effect; it shows the effect of that which preceded and is in turn destined to have a causal action on that which is to follow. Not only do the lives and works of all individuals proclaim this to be so, but larger units, such as associations of individuals, or the collective work of a similar nature of many individuals, also show it forth. All history bears testimony of it. In the fascinating and terrible pages of written history one learns not only of the rise and decline of individuals, but of empires, civilizations, races and all their cultural manifestations; arts, religions, and philosophies.

When we contemplate the history of an art; say the graphic art, drawing and painting—we discover a period when the laws of perspective were not understood. Later we discover a time when they were understood, and we notice that all graphic artists have availed themselves of them. This discovery of the laws of perspective cannot be considered as a purely individual idiosyncrasy—having no relation to the art which preceded and no effect on subsequent art, but must be considered as a step in the progress of the art itself.

Likewise in the art of music the discovery of harmony presents a similar case. This discovery can be attributed to no one individual but extended over several hundred years. Its comparatively recent occurrence has left the documents by which its gradual development may be studied well nigh intact. He who should assert that the musical composers of the world for, say the last 800 years, have each one been a simple, unrelated individual artist, deriving no hint of his procedure from his predecessors, and having no influence on his successors, would indeed display great presumption or great ignorance.

All movement is of a cyclical nature. There is progress and there is decadence, integration and disintegration, generation and degeneration. The first is the rise, the second the decline. It takes the operation of both to complete the cycle. One follows the other. From death springs life and the end of life is death. As surely as the night will follow the day, will the night give place

to a new dawn. That which tends to confuse and to blind us to the recognition of this law, is the fact that the cycles of the various movements are of various lengths, and that the general aspects of things present such extreme differences. The day is shorter than the season. The season is shorter than the life of a species of animal or plant, and not only are these things of varying lengths but their great difference in *kind* from one of *man's* activities tends to shut our eyes to the fact that the cyclical law affects them all.

But nature in all its manifestations—physical nature, animals, plants, man and all his works and inventions, including *art*—nature, I say, is everywhere seen to follow this cyclical law. The complete story of any of man's activities will show forth both the element of progress and decline and give evidence of its cyclical nature as surely as the life of a plant or animal. This is the testimony of history, and one of the logical conclusions of philosophy.